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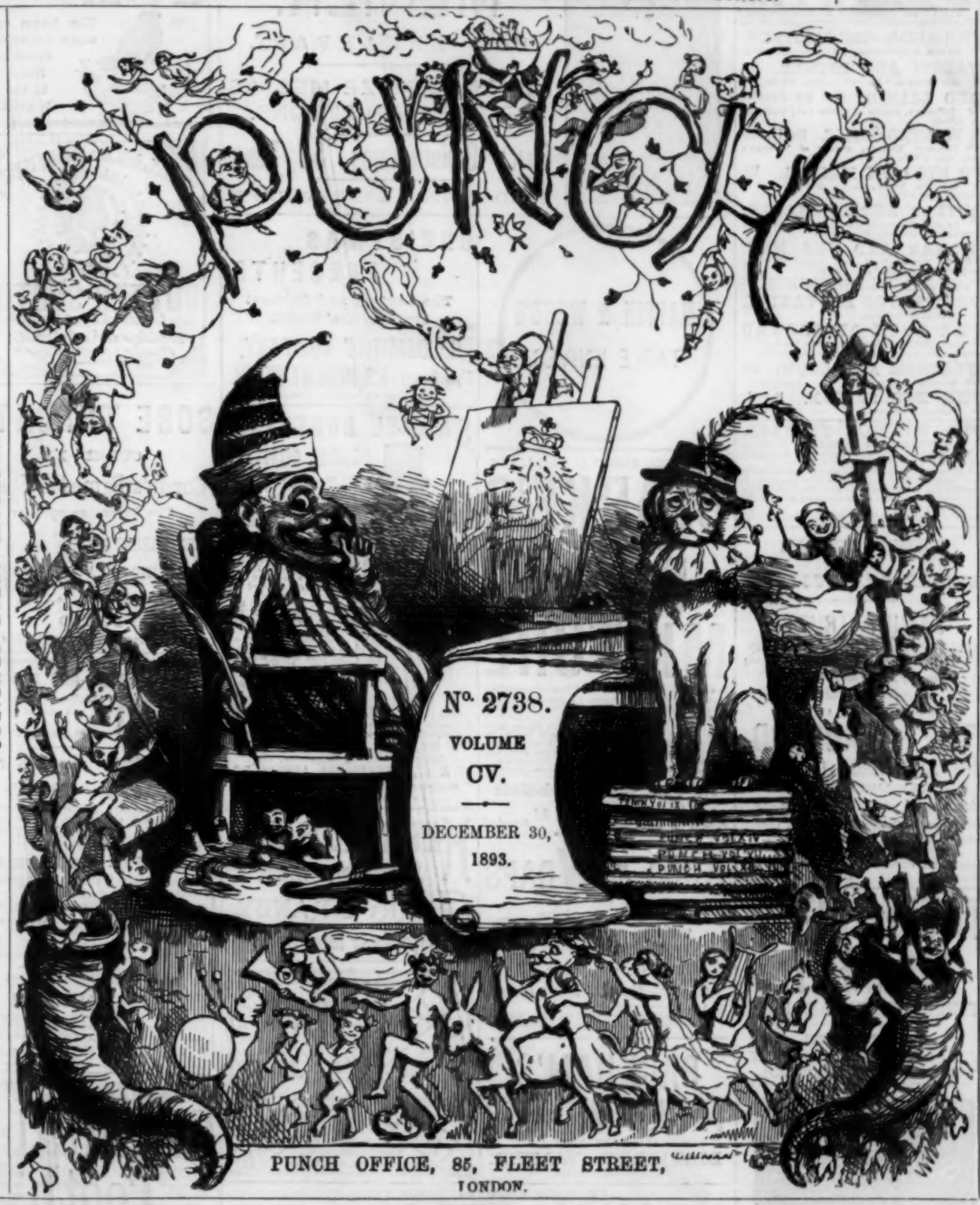

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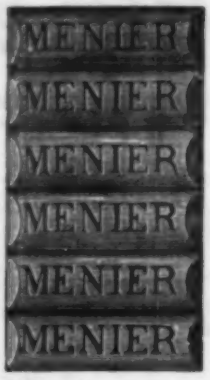

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THE ADVENTURES OF PICKLOCK HOLES.

(By Cunnin Toil.)

No. VII.—THE STOLEN MARCH.
(Continued.)

As soon as we entered the drawing-room all the little GUMPSHONS clapped their hands with delight, and surrounded their Uncle PICKLOCK, each of them attempting to infer from the expression on the great detective's countenance what it was that he carried in his left coat-tail pocket. "I know what it is," said EDGAR ALLAN POE GUMPSHON, a boy of fifteen; "it's plum-cake. I know it must be, because I never seed it, so it ain't seed-cake." GABORIAU GUMPSHON, aged thirteen, opined it was a packet of bull's-eyes, "'cos that 's what detectives always carry on dark nights," whilst ANN RADCLIFFE GUMPSHON declared with certainty that it must be nuts, for she had just heard a cracker explode in the street. "Children," said PICKLOCK HOLES, "you are nearly right. Your powers have much improved. I am delighted to see that you are kept up to the mark;" and, speaking thus, he produced from his pocket an apple, which he presented to EDGAR, a pocket-knife which he handed to the jubilant GABORIAU, and a pin-cushion, which was immediately clasped and carried off in the chubby hand of little ANN RADCLIFFE. "A year ago," said PICKLOCK, turning to me, "these children could not have reasoned inductively with one half of their present approximate accuracy; but my dear sister. Heaven bless her! is a wonderful teacher, the best and cleverest of us all. Indeed, indeed you are, PHILIPPA," he continued, warmly embracing Mrs. GUMPSHON. "I am a mere bungler compared to you. But come, let us to business." At a signal from Lady HOLES the happy children trooped off to bed, and we elders were left alone.

SIR AMINADAB opened the conversation. "I sent for you, my dear boy," he said, "because I have just received from one of my agents in the North information of an important case which demands immediate investigation. Neither HATLOFT nor SKAIRKROW can go, having business that keeps them in London. I look, therefore, to you to cover the family name with new lustre by solving this extraordinary mystery." Here the old man paused, as though overcome by emotion. PICKLOCK encouraged him with an expressive look, and he continued:—

"This morning," he said, "I received from my agent this letter." He drew a sheet of paper from his breast-pocket, and read, in tremulous tones, as follows:—

"'*Tochtachie Castle, Daffshire.*

"'SIR,—Lord TOCHTACHIE has been robbed. I overheard him last night conversing with the Hon. IAN STRUNACHAR, his eldest son, who used the following words: "Not a doubt of it. They have stolen a march——" More I could not hear at the moment. The case is of immense importance, and I trust you will lose no time in sending a competent investigator. I have, of course, concealed both my presence here and my knowledge of the theft from his lordship. "'Yours faithfully, 'DAVID MCPHIZZLE.'"

"There, my boy, is the case. Will you go and help a Scotch representative peer to recover his own? Think how terrible it must be to lose the march or boundary that separates your ancestral domain from that of a neighbour whose whole course of life may be antipathetic to you. Will you go?"

A wave of emotion passed over my friend's face. I could see that a struggle of no ordinary kind was raging in his breast. Finally, however, he looked at me, and his mind, I knew, was made up. In another ten minutes we had bidden adieu to his family, and were speeding northwards in the Scotch express.

Over the details of the journey it is not necessary to linger. Suffice it to say that on the following morning we arrived at Tochtachie, and took up our quarters in a deserted barn situated in the very centre of the estate. From this point we pursued our investigations. Our first proceeding was to interview the local constabulary, but we found them as obtuse and as foolishly incredulous as policemen are all the world over. One of them, indeed, went so far as to hint that HOLES was "havering," which I understand to be an ancient Gaelic word signifying metaphysical talk, but a look from the great detective chilled him into silence. Day by day we worked, and not even the night gave us a rest from our self-sacrificing labours. We mapped out the whole district into square yards; we gathered the life-history of every single inhabitant on the estate; we left no clue untracked, no loophole unblocked, no single piece of evidence unexamined, no footstep unmeasured. We collected every scrap of torn letter, every crumpled telegram-form. The very heather of the moor, and the trees growing in the policies of the Castle were compelled by HOLES' marvellous inductive powers to yield to us their secrets, until after weeks of patient toil we at last judged ourselves to be in possession not only of the stolen march, but also of evidence that would bring conviction home to the guilty party. We had paused, I remember, by a heap of granite at the roadside. HOLES seemed strangely excited. "A march," I heard him muttering, "is performed by footsteps; steps are often made of stone. Can this be it? It must be! It is!" Then, with a shout of triumph, he gave orders to have the heap loaded on to a country cart, which was to follow us to the Castle.

PORTRAIT OF MR. "MINCE-PIE,"
THE M.P FOR CHRISTMAS.

We arrived in the great courtyard at about seven o'clock in the evening. HOLES slipped from my side, entered the house, and after a few moments returned to my side. We then clanged the bell, and demanded to see his lordship. In a few moments Lord TOCHTACHIE appeared, surrounded by kilted retainers, bearing torches, and intoning in unison the mournful sporan of the clan. It was a weird and awful sight. But HOLES, unemotional as ever, advanced at once to the haughty Scotchman, before whose eye half a county was accustomed to tremble, and, without any ado, addressed him thus: "My Lord, your march has been stolen. Nay, do not interrupt me. Your guards are careless, but not criminal—of that I can assure you. Here is the stolen property; I restore it to you without cost." At this moment the cart rumbled up, and ere the peer had time to utter a word, it had discharged its contents into the middle of the yard. HOLES went on, but in a lower voice, so as to be heard only by Lord TOCHTACHIE: "The guilty party, my Lord, is your honoured father-in-law. He dare not, he cannot, deny it. He is, I know, blind and deaf and dumb. These qualities do not, however, exclude the possibility of crime. I have just found these pieces of granite in his morning-room. The proof is complete."

At this moment a shot was heard in the Castle, and directly afterwards a frightened butler rushed up to his lordship and whispered to him. "Ha! say you so?" almost screamed Lord TOCHTACHIE. "That amounts to a confession. Mr. HOLES," he continued, "you have indeed rendered me a service. My unfortunate, but guilty father-in-law has shot and missed himself through the head. But in any case the honour of the house is, I know, safe in your hands."

I need hardly say that HOLES has never violated his lordship's confidence, and the Daffshire peasants still speculate amongst themselves upon the tortuous mystery of the march which was stolen and restored.

NOTE.—There is no proof positive given by any eye-witness whose veracity is unimpeachable of the death of the great amateur detective as it has been described in the *Strand Magazine* for this month. *Where is the merry Swiss boy who delivered the note and disappeared?* What was the symbolic meaning of the alpenstock with the hook at the end, left on the rock? Why, that he had *not* "taken his hook." PICKLOCK HOLES has disappeared, but so have a great many other people. That he will turn up again no student of detective history and of the annals of crime can possibly doubt. Is it not probable that he has only dropped out of the *Strand Magazine*? And is it not equally probable that under some alias he will re-appear elsewhere? *Verb. sap.*—ED.

FATHER CHRISTMAS leaves his cards on everybody about this time, as he is here only for one day, and off the next. He has employed Messrs. MARCUS WARD & CO. to do them, and excellent they are all round.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH.

Lady Betty (proud of the old ancestral mansion where the family have lived ever since the reign of Henry the Eighth). "JUST FANCY WHAT PAPA 'S HAVING DONE! HE 'S HAVING THE ELECTRIC LIGHT PUT IN!"

Prosaic Sister-in-law (from Chicago). "I 'M REAL GLAD TO HEAR IT. IT 'LL BE THE MAKING OF THE PLACE!"

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Friday, December 22.—House adiourned for Christmas Recess; pleased to find that it will include the whole of Christmas Day. Some talk of being satisfied with the Sunday, spending Christmas Day in further pursuit of Parish Councils Bill. But after deliberation decided to have a real good holiday on Christmas Day. Came across SQUIRE OF MALWOOD just now. Was chalking up on door "Back in ten minutes."

"It's a little more than that, of course, TOBY," he said. "But that has business-like look. Am told it 's what they do in the City before going out for hasty luncheon."

Toby, M.P., enjoys his holiday.

Enjoyed my holiday reading HERBERT MAXWELL'S life of OLD MORALITY just published by BLACKWOOD. A difficult task; much easier to make attractive book out of life of NAPOLEON BONAPARTE than with WILLIAM HENRY SMITH as subject. That MAXWELL has succeeded appears from fact that one leaves these volumes with warmer esteem and sincerer liking for OLD MORALITY even than was born of close observation through many Parliamentary sessions. MAXWELL has had full access to his correspondence and journals. Uses them with great discretion; they bring into mellow, clear light the capable, unselfish, courageous man, ever following the loadstar of Duty. House of Commons used to smile when OLD MORALITY, faced by any difficulty or dilemma, talked about his "duty to his QUEEN and country." In his private letters he does not put it in that oratorical form. But they are full of references to the calls of duty. Stricken with a painful malady, worn in body and wounded in spirit, OLD MORALITY still sturdily trod the narrow path. There is little doubt that had he, two years before the end came, retired from the Leadership of the House of Commons his genial presence might have been with us to-day. But he was wanted at his post, and he stuck to it.

Writing on the 17th March, 1889, he says: "We have trouble in politics, and I am very weary. But I must go on doing my daily work as best I can, looking for guidance and wisdom where alone it can be had until my rest comes." This cry for rest was always sounding, through day and night. A few weeks earlier he wrote to another friend: "I can say God help me. He will take me out of my work when I am no longer required, and then will come rest."

His last appearance in a semi-official capacity was in July, 1891, when he went to Hatfield to meet the German Emperor. In the last letter written to his wife he says, "Observing I looked tired last night, Lady SALISBURY urged me to go to bed early: which I did." One of his colleagues in the Cabinet, a fellow-guest at Hatfield on this occasion, tells me he had occasion to know that OLD MORALITY was in such pain he could not rest in his bed, spending the long night walking about the room, with occasional rest in an arm-chair. Not a word of this is written in the letter to Mrs. SMITH, in which he reports that "everything has gone off wonderfully well to-day, which must be very satisfactory to the Salisburys." Under his bourgeois habit and unassuming manner W. H. SMITH modestly hid a chivalrous mind and a noble nature. He had a kindly heart, too. But everyone knew that, since he wore it on his sleeve.

The last I saw of Harcourt.

Business done.—Adjourned for so-called Christmas holidays. Think I 'll go and call on Lobengula. "Back in ten minutes," as the SQUIRE says.

EDEPOL!

SIR,—"I 'm all the way from Westminster," and the work I have to do is to let you know about the Latin play performed there. PLAUTUS, in truth, is not a wildly exciting writer, and there is in the *Trinummus* a tameness which, extending, as it does, through five acts, becomes almost oppressive at the end. The young actors looked well and enunciated clearly, and one of them, Mr. J. F. WATERS, showed considerable ability as an actor. But we don't go to the College of St. Peter at Westminster merely to see the play. There are other interests. It is pleasant to watch the Old Westminsters rubbing recollections with one another between the acts, and endeavouring gallantly during the performance to keep their rusty Latin abreast of the various situations. Laughter in a Latin play straggles. It is like a dropping fire of musketry. A Westminster master probably leads it off; various intelligent veterans take it up dutifully, and the ladies, bless their unlatinised minds, follow faintly towards the end. If a London manager wants applause in his theatre let him hire a contingent of small Westminster boys. They have attained to absolute perfection in the arts of the *claque*. At no Paris Theatre is it better done. The epilogue showed a pretty wit and a high degree of skill in the management of hexameter and pentameter. No one could have believed that the Kodak advertisement, "you press the button, we do the rest," would have made so good a Latin line. Much pleased, and so to bed.

Yours, A VAGRANT.

"A MERE QUESTION OF TIME."—*Example:* "What o'clock is it?"

OUR "HOUSE PARTY" AT CHRISTMAS.

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT LATTERDAY HALL.

(An Incident.)

SCENE I.—*Library in Latterday Hall*, Sir LYON TAYMER'S *Country House.* Sir LYON TAYMER *discovered fuming by the mantelpiece, while his* Secretary *is glancing over some correspondence.*

Sir Lyon (*irritably*). Here—I suppose you will have to answer this.

Secretary. What is that, Sir LYON?

Sir Lyon. You know how anxious I am that my New Year's party should be a success. A whole heap of celebrities are coming, and, notwithstanding the immense expense, I engaged a party of Ghosts to amuse them. Now I have just had a telepathic communication from these Shadows of Shades—(that's all they are—only Ghosts of departed heroes and heroines in fiction)—asking whether they're to be treated on an equality with the other guests, or as mere entertainers! Did you ever hear of such impertinence! The spokesman—I should say, perhaps, the Spooksman—is, of all people in the other world, the VICAR OF WAKEFIELD. A clergyman too! It's quite inconsistent; and so snobbish!

Secretary. Dear Sir LYON, excuse me, but it's perfectly natural that Ghosts should be a little sensitive on the social question. Remember, for years they were ignored, or looked upon as mountebanks. It is really only of late that there has been all this excitement about them, so it is not surprising they are anxious to be taken seriously.

Sir Lyon. Well, I suppose I am old-fashioned, but it seems to me quite ridiculous. These infernal Ghosts give themselves as many airs as though they were—the Blue Hungarians, at least.

Secretary. Ah, from a band we might expect airs. But I should advise you very strongly, Sir LYON, to treat them as friends. You *must* be up to date.

Sir Lyon (*with disgust*). Allow them to dine—perhaps to *dance*—with my guests?

Secretary (*with calmness*). Certainly they will have to dine; and, as to dancing, of course they *must*, if they're received on an equal *footing.* [*Smiles to himself at his joke.*

Sir Lyon. Oh—well—I suppose I must give in. Let them know at once, and for heaven's sake mind they're punctual.

[*Scene closes as the* Secretary *hastily seizes a slate, and automatically writes to the Ghosts a very cordial and courteously-worded invitation.*

Dorian Gray taking Juliet in to dinner.

SCENE II.—*New Year's Eve at Latterday Hall. In the magnificent dining-room are seated at dinner a large, well-known, and incongruous company. The Ghosts are chatting away in the most genial manner with the living distinguished people, and positively making the "celebrities" quite "at home."* DANIEL DERONDA *shows a marked liking for* DODO, *whom he has taken to dinner, and is indulging in a light and airy flirtation with her, which takes a form peculiar to himself.*

Daniel Deronda (*earnestly*). Who has ever pinched into its pilulous smallness the cobweb of matrimonial duty? Honesty is surely the broadest basis of joy in life.

Dodo (*a modern Detail in accordion pleating, subject to morbid fits of irrelevant skirt-dancing*). Oh, Mr. DERONDA, what a silly girl I am! I can't bear that proverb about "Honesty being the best policy." It sounds like a sort of life Insurance.

[*Giggles contemporarily.* DORIAN GRAY *having taken* JULIET *to dinner, and not getting on with her very well, is staring with unfeigned horror at* ROCHESTER, *opposite, who is bullying* JANE EYRE *to a pitiable extent. Behind him is a screen of gilt Spanish leather, wrought with a rather florid Louis Seize design and encrusted with pearls, moonstones, and large green emeralds.*

Dorian (*aside, to* Young Subaltern, *who has come Home. On leave. For Christmas*). Who *is* that dreadful man?

Young Subaltern. Who? Old ROCHESTER? Oh, he's a Plain Hero. From the past. He's all right. How well you're looking! Younger than ever, by Jove! Which is curious. But why that absurd buttonhole?

Dorian (*hurt*). You never like anything I wear. You Anglo-Indians are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.

[*Arranges his fringe in an old Dutch-silver mirror on the opposite mantelpiece, framed in curiously-carved ivory Cupids, and studded with precious stones, chiefly opals, sapphires, and chrysoberyls.*

Ethel Newcome (*to* Secretary). Who are those two pretty American girls? They seem to be attracting a great deal of attention. (*I* am completely forgotten, I notice.) Do their dresses come from Paris?

Secretary. No. I think not, dear Miss NEWCOME. From Messrs. HOWELLS AND JAMES, I fancy.

Richard Feverel (*cheerily, across the table to* Mr. PICKWICK). In tolerance of some dithyrambic inebriety—quiverings of semi-narration—we seem to be entering the circle of a most magnetic pseudo-polarity. Don't we?

Mr. Pickwick (*puzzled*). Very kind of you to say so, I'm sure. May I have the pleasure of taking wine with you?

[*Dinner proceeds with animation.* BOOTLES' Baby, Little JIM, PAUL DOMBEY, *and the* Heavenly Twins *come in to dessert, and are more or less troublesome.*

Sir Lyon (*aside, to* Secretary, *when the ladies have retired*). I say, you know I am afraid this is going to hang fire. It's nothing less than a miracle for a social affair to go off well when the people are not in the same set. Old PICKWICK's been asking for "a wassail bowl." I haven't got such a thing about me; and I should have thought '74 champagne would have been good enough, but he says it's like our humour—*too new!* The children are bothering to know why there isn't a Christmas-tree.

Secretary. Tell them to go to the—Haymarket. The reward will be—swift. Might I suggest mistletoe? I should be very pleased to go under it with Madame BOVARY, just to show the others how to——

Sir Lyon (*stiffly*). Much obliged, but I will not give you that trouble. If *anyone* goes under the mistletoe with Madame BOVARY it will be myself. Remember that.

Secretary. Oh, certainly! I merely meant—— How about crackers? I could set the thing going by pulling one with Miss OLIVIA. The old Vicar said just now, in his pointed, Gothic way, something about times having changed, and——

Sir Lyon. Yes, we'll have crackers, but you can leave *me* to pull the first one with Miss OLIVIA. It would look better. Perhaps we'd better let the Ghosts give their entertainment now—eh?

Secretary. I'll arrange it at once.

SCENE III.—*In the Hall, in which is a temporary theatre; all the Modern Celebrities are seated on rows of chairs, chattering, flirting, and discussing Insomnia and the New Criticism. Behind the scenes the Ghosts are disputing as to which shall recite first, the order of precedence depending entirely on the question as to which is the most completely defunct. Finally,* ERNEST MALTRAVERS *and* TOM JONES *go on together, and the Curtain goes up.*

Ernest Maltravers (*musingly, in a low yet ringing voice, in which Pride struggles with Emotion*). Let us learn, from yon dinner-table, o'er which brooded the spirits of the Novelists of all time, to lift ourselves on the wings of Romanticism back to Bombastic and Primeval Prose. (*Breaks off suddenly. Aside, to* TOM JONES.) I cannot go on like this. We ought to have had a *scenario.*

Tom Jones (*suppressing laughter, aside*). Why, thou foolish scoundrel, is there not one in front? How else could be seated there so many fair ladies and gallant gentlemen?

Ernest Maltravers (*aside*). In the contemplation of your idiocy, I curb with difficulty the impulse that leads me to crush the life from your bosom. Know, Ignorant One, that a *scenario* is not the same thing as an auditorium.

[TOM JONES *is about to attack him with fine old English violence, when the curtain suddenly falls. The entertainment is interrupted. The audience appear at once amused and shocked* DORIAN *takes out his little vinaigrette exquisitely set with turquoises, cymophanes, amethysts, and tourmalines, and offers it to the* Subaltern, *who, evidently unaware of its use, pockets it.*

Subaltern. You got that out of a cracker, didn't you? I'll take it Home. For the kids.

[*The entr'acte is growing so prolonged that the* Secretary *goes behind the scenes to know the cause of the delay. He finds all confusion. The party has been increased by the presence of* Mr. STEAD'S *Spook* JULIA, *who, having half an hour to spare, has come to protest against the "indignity," as she calls it, of fine old crusted Ghosts being expected to perform to a lot of mere modern myths. She speaks with such eloquence that she persuades them, one and all, to leave without finishing their performance and entirely without ceremony. Nothing the* Secretary *can say has any effect, and they all vanish, leaving "not a wrack behind," except a slate pencil* JULIA *has dropped in her excitement.*

Sir Lyon (*after hearing the news*). Shameful! Never again will I have a Ghost in this house. This is what comes of treating them as equals! I'll—I'll—I'll write to the Psychical Society!

[*Scene closes as all the guests crowd round him and ask him to drink the health of Modern Fiction and—The New Year.*

MAY AND DECEMBER.

[Brighton is now represented by two of the youngest members in the House. . . . Mr. GLADSTONE intends to spend Christmas at Brighton.]

JUST now, when the weather seems May in December,
They've sent up from Brighton another young member,
Two juvenile gentlemen sit for the town,
Their ages united just two-thirds would be
Of that of the statesman who often goes down
To seek renewed youth by the murmuring sea—
Mr. G.

Two Tories—meek May fighting sturdy December
Their foe is an old hand these lads should remember.
They'll probably sit most judiciously dumb,
Or only object like the murmuring sea.
To the House, sent from Brighton, the youngest have come;
From the House, down at Brighton, the oldest will be—
Mr. G.

A SEASONABLE VADE MECUM.

(*By Ker Mudgeon, Senior.*)

Question. What is the most satisfactory motto for Christmas?

Answer. That it "comes but once a year."

Q. Then it is as well to take a gloomy view of the season?

A. That is the only reasonable aspect in the face of a pile of "Christmas bills."

Q. What are Christmas cards?

A. Advertisements of existence sent to enemies as well as friends.

Q. What is a plum pudding?

A. Indigestion in the concrete.

Q. And a mince pie?

A. An excuse for a glass of brandy or a glass of any other equally potent liquid.

Q. Does old-fashioned English Christmas fare benefit anyone?

A. Yes; doctors and chemists.

Q. Why does an elderly person go the pantomime?

A. Because he likes it just as much as a schoolboy.

Q. What reason does he give for his visits to Drury Lane, the Lyceum, or the Crystal Palace?

A. That he visits those places of entertainment for the sake of the children.

Q. But if he is an old bachelor?

A. He declares that he likes to see the delight of other people's children.

Q. What is the *spécialité* of a Christmas family party?

A. Row all round.

Q. What are the regulation wishes of Yule-tide?

A. A Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Q. And the probable result?

A. The attainment of neither.

CROSSED IN LOVE.—A wedding-present cheque.

FINAL ORDERS.

Keeper (*to Boy out for his first day's driving*). "MIND AND SPREAD YERSELF OUT!"

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

"SIR," said a wisely deferential friend of the Baron's, approaching the Baronial arm-chair wherein sat His Super-Excellency regaling himself in truly Regal-Cole-ian fashion, "Sir, I present to your notice a book entitled *In Search of a Climate.*" "With such a title," quoth the Baron, in poetic humour, "it should have been dedicated to His Grace of Canterbury. Would not this distich well favour the title-page? Listen:—

"'In Search of a Climate,' | From CHARLES B. NOTTAGE,
This to the Primate! | Who lives in a cottage."

"W. A.," or "The Wisely Appreciative," went into wisely appreciative ecstasies. "Baron," he presently resumed, "you will be graciously pleased to read it." "I will recline on my sofa," returned the Baron, "and, in that position, do my level best." So saying, His Super-Excellency suited the action to the word, and, waving his hand in token that he was not to be disturbed for the space of some forty winks or more, he bent his head in silent study o'er the somewhat bulky volume. "One of the most interesting and instructive chapters in this excellently elaborated book of reference," said the Baron, some time afterwards—"a book full of 'wise saws and modern instances'—is that headed 'Religion and Rum,' whence it appears that, whatever form of worship the Natives from time to time might adopt, it always included the cult of spirits in some form or other. The title of this chapter," observed the Baron, judicially, "instead of 'Religion and Rum,' should rather have been 'Rum Religions, or Spirituous Influences.' Towards the close of the book the author still seems to be *In Search of a Climate.* But what sort of a climate does he seek? One to suit everybody? Why, like the distinguished individual who was 'terribly disappointed with the Atlantic,' there are people, quoted as testimony above proof by Mr. NOTTAGE, of the Cottage, who were 'all terribly disappointed with the climate of Santa Barbara and Los Angeles.' Well, then," quoth the Baron, "try Margate and Ramsgate." The book, attractively got up, is published by the firm whose name always recalls to the Baron's verse-atile mind that delightful poem set to dulcet music ycleped "*Soft and Low, Soft and Low,*" only that the names are SAMP-SON LOW, LOW & Co., which, set to the same strain, will "do as well." "And," quoth the Baron, suddenly inspired, "what a series of songs for Publishers and Bookbinders might be written! For example, '*My Mother bids me bind my books!*' '*I am inter-leaving thes in sorrow.*' *Cum multis aliis suggestionibus!* But this is *délassement.* Let our toast be, 'Our noble Shelves!'—'our noble Book-shelves!'" explains the Baron, gaily; and so back to the Brown Study where, as Baron BROWN BEARD, he disposes of the various heads in his department, and signs himself, THE JUST AND GENEROUS BARON DE BOOK-WORMS.

MRS. RAM says no wonder people are blown out at Christmas, as they do fill themselves with so many "combustibles."

"SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE."

(A Meeting of the Church of England Temperance Society. The Vote of Thanks to the Chairman.)

"AND, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, LET ME POINT OUT TO YOU, IN THESE DAYS WHEN THE ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH IS SO OFTEN CALLED INTO QUESTION, THAT OUR REVERED DIOCESAN COULD NEVER BE CALLED AN '*ORNAMENTAL BISHOP*'!"

"THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT."

(Passages from a Political Christmas Carol" of the Period descriptive of a slumbering Statesman's Yule-Tide Dream.)

* * * * * *

AWAKING in the middle of a prodigiously sonorous snore, and sitting up on what seemed to be a nightmare-like blend of the Treasury Bench and his own bed, to get his thoughts together, SADSTONE (like *Scrooge*) had no occasion to be told that Big Ben was again upon the stroke of Twelve.

Now, being prepared for almost anything—from J-SS-E C-LL-NGS to a Vote of Censure—he was not by any means prepared for Nothing! Consequently, when the bell boomed its twelfth stroke, and nothing appeared, or happened—not even a nightmare in the shape of T-MMY B-WL-S, or a Motion for Adjournment—he was taken with a fit of the shivers.

At last he began to think that the source and centre of the ghostly light which seemed to gleam on him from nowhere in particular, might be in the adjoining room, his own private Downing Street *sanctum*. Thence indeed, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly, and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

The moment SADSTONE's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with shamrock green and shillalagh branches that it looked a perfect Grove of Blarney. A lurid blaze, like a blue-tongued snapdragon flare, went hissing up the chimney, revealing in weird glimpses on the heated hearth and chimney tiles spectral figures of impish design and menacing gesture. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were Blue Books, abortive Bills, scrolls on which were inscribed endless questions and unnumbered amendments; bundles of party papers and political pamphlets; pallid sucking-pigs that seemed to demand rather opportune interment than human digestion; long wreaths of sausage-like shackles; resurrection pies of indigestible crust and full of offal scraps and tainted "block ornaments"; pudding-shaped bombs; barrels of explosives and fulminants; red hot (political) "chestnuts" of the most hackneyed partisan sort; Dead-Sea apples of the dustiest kind, savouring of sand and strife; fiery looking Ulster oranges; belated (parliamentary) pairs, and seething bowls of raw and vitriolic party spirit, that made the chamber dim, dank, and malodorous with their heady steam. In uneasy state upon this extraordinary conglomerate couch or throne, there sat an ogreish giant of pantomimic size and bogeyishly menacing expression, portentous to see; who bore a smokily-flaring torch, in shape not unlike an Anarch's beacon or Fury's bale-fire, and held it up, high up, to shed its lurid light on SANDSTONE, as he came peeping round the door.

"Come in!" exclaimed the Ghoul-Ghost. "Come in, and know me better, (G. O.) Man!"

SADSTONE entered timidly, and hung his head before the Spirit. He was hardly the dogged SADSTONE he had been, and the Spirit's eyes were so glowering and ungenial, he did not like to meet them.

"I am the Spirit of Christmas Present," said the apparition. "Look upon me!"

SADSTONE sorrowfully did so. It was clothed in one simple emerald-green robe or mantle, bordered with buff fur of the dull tint dear to the old Scotch Whig. This garment hung so loosely on the figure that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. On its head it wore no other covering than a wreath of shamrock, set here and there with a thistle. Its dull black curls were long and elf-like and weird; weird as its frowning face, its staring eye, its clenched hand, its raucous voice, its despotic demeanour, and its gloomy air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard, holding a huge two-handed sword; the blade, ready to leap from its sheath, seemed a most unsuitable and unseasonable adjunct to what mankind has been wont to regard as the gentle and genial Spirit of Peace and Goodwill.

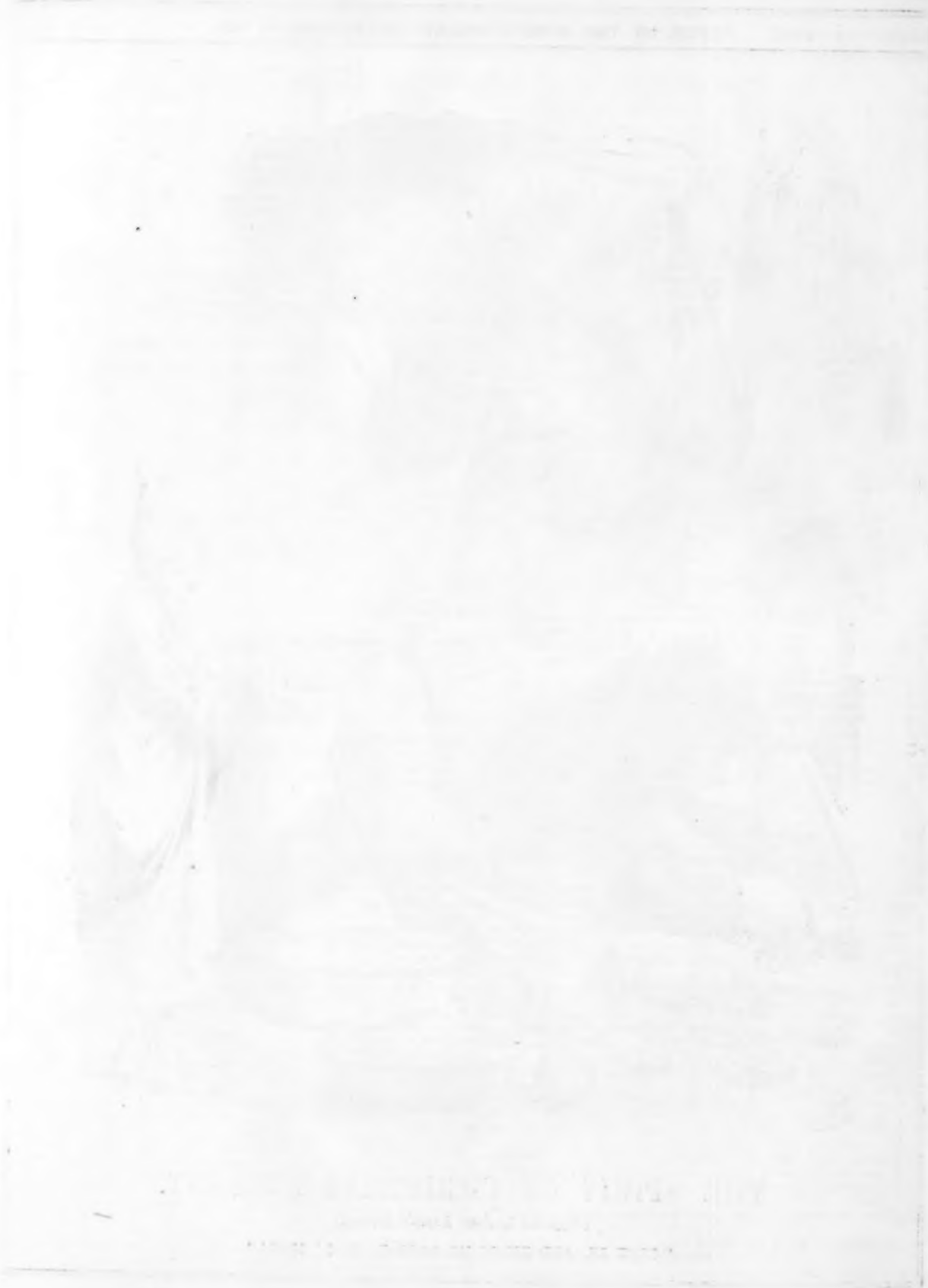
"You have never seen the like of *Me* before!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"*Ne-e-ver!*" SADSTONE made answer to it, in accents stammering somewhat, yet most emphatic.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

(Suggested by John Leech's Picture.)

"COME IN, AND KNOW ME BETTER, (G. O.) MAN!"



DISTORTED MERCY.

It is New Year's Eve. In a comfortable arm-chair by the fire sits the Metropolitan Magistrate. *He smiles in self-complacency. He speaks:—*

This year I have most faithfully fulfilled my duty; the spirit of sweet leniency has marked my every sentence—at least toward the more flagitious and inhuman offender. Thus have I, in place of punishing, won over to more virtuous ways; so may I doze the cheerful, self-admiring doze of virtue.

[*He dozes. Gathering from the comfortable reflections of the fire and lamp thrown from the polished furniture, a radiant form shapes itself at his elbow. The* Magistrate *smiles in his sleep, in great content.*

The Metropolitan Magistrate. Who art thou, visitant?

The Form. I am the Spirit of thy Leniency. I come to show thee how fair and flattering a result thy milder sentences—to wit, those passed upon the more outrageous culprits — have yielded. See! (*Waves a wand.*) This is he who came before thy judgment seat for —after repeated warning—selling milk from premises teeming with scarlet fever. Thou didst say, "*It is the grossest and most shocking case of brutal disregard for human life I ever heard!*" and thereupon didst fine him half-a-crown—the minimum penalty.

M. Mag. (*with affectionate interest*). And since? How farest now, thou naughty one?

Milk Criminal. O most blessed Magistrate and sweet Your Worship, I fare most happily; for, most comfortably encouraged by your gracious leniency, I did redouble—nay, multiply an hundred times—mine efforts to disseminate disease; so that I may, without undue boasting, claim to be father of an epidemic that felled its hundreds. And further, in the doing of this I have heaped up a most goodly pile of gold. Give me your blessing, most sympathetic Your Worship!

M. Mag. (*recoiling*). Nay; mine intentions looked not toward so dire result! I cannot bless——

The Spirit. How, good Stipendiary? Dost thou now disown me, thine own Spirit? Thou must surely bless thy *protégé*, him who but carries out thy methods to their logical result! And see, I summon others of thy choice; this good butcher who hath sent unwholesome meat to London to feed the poor. Thou didst say of him, "*A most inhuman, ill-conditioned knave and rascal; a constructive homicide! I will not imprison him, but fine him seven shillings.*" And again, see this good rough who kicked a constable nearly to death; thou saidst of him, "*A miscreant unfit to live. A savage worse than any tiger! One shilling fine.*" Then finding he could not pay without foregoing his accustomed gin, thy heart relented, and thou didst discharge him. Then again, here have we this fair hawker who kicked his donkey's legs and so belaboured him with cudgels that he left no bone unbroken; thou saidst of him, "*An act more horrible and sickening could scarce be perpetrated by a fiend!*" Then, with a gentle caution, thou didst set him free.

M. Mag. But tell me, prithee, what the outcome was of these my leniences. Did results not justify——?

The Butcher. Oh, yes, indeed, in my case! Taking courage, seeing that justice was so linked with mercy, I did extend most energetically my little venture in unwholesome meat, and now am rich, and have been made a lord.

The Rough. And since your clemency, O sweet your Worship, I've kicked to death some dozens of assorted victims—policemen, girls, and infants.

The Hawker. And I——

M. Mag. (*writhing*). Oh, peace, and spare me! Get ye gone!

The Criminals. What? This is passing strange! You will not bless the work yourself have fostered?

M. Mag. (*tearing his hair*). *I* fostered? *I*, the gentle magistrate, the soul of clemency——?

The Spirit. Come, bless thy chosen clients!

[*With a shriek the* Metropolitan Magistrate *awakes from his doze. He is haggard; his eye is bloodshot with horror. He speaks, shuddering:—*

What are these hideous crimes that I have done, mistaking them for mercy? How unworthy am I to touch so sweet an attribute, distorting and most basely turning it from its appointed course! There chime the bells. Let them proclaim how, in the coming year they usher in, I will essay to win this fair, sweet attribute entrusted to me, and so misshapen by my cruelties, back to her rightful form! I will begin by showing mercy unto Mercy's self.

A STUDY IN BROWN.

I've caught you, hazel-eyed brunette, day-dreaming, chin on hand!
Don't think, now, that my stolen sketch is bold and contraband!
Nay, rather, 'tis the *duty* that 's imposed on ev'ry beauty,
To grant that with respectful glance her profile may be scanned.

To picture such a wealth of brown would
VANDYCK's self delight;
Brown eyes I see, and waving hair, brown
as a summer night.
I cannot do you justice, but this thumb-
nail sketch, I trust, is
A deep brown-study rendered into simple
black and white.

In reverie reflective, has your wayward
fancy strayed,
It may be, to last summer's tryst in
some wild English glade,
Or old-world forest-garden, where,
like *Rosalind* in Arden,
Your troth you plighted, or, love-lorn,
outmourned the Nut-brown Maid?

You 're wand'ring in Mahatma-land, and
counting astral sheep?
And gathering wool that never grew, a
Brownie-led *Bo-peep*,
Or, possibly, pursuant of an Ego playing truant,
And lost amid the labyrinth of dim hypnotic sleep?

For all I know, you 're musing in this meditative trance
On modern and sublunar joys, as dinner, dress, and dance!
Or is it *toothache* merely that—well, makes you stare so queerly?
(Somehow I ne'er *can* draw the line 'twixt bathos and romance!)

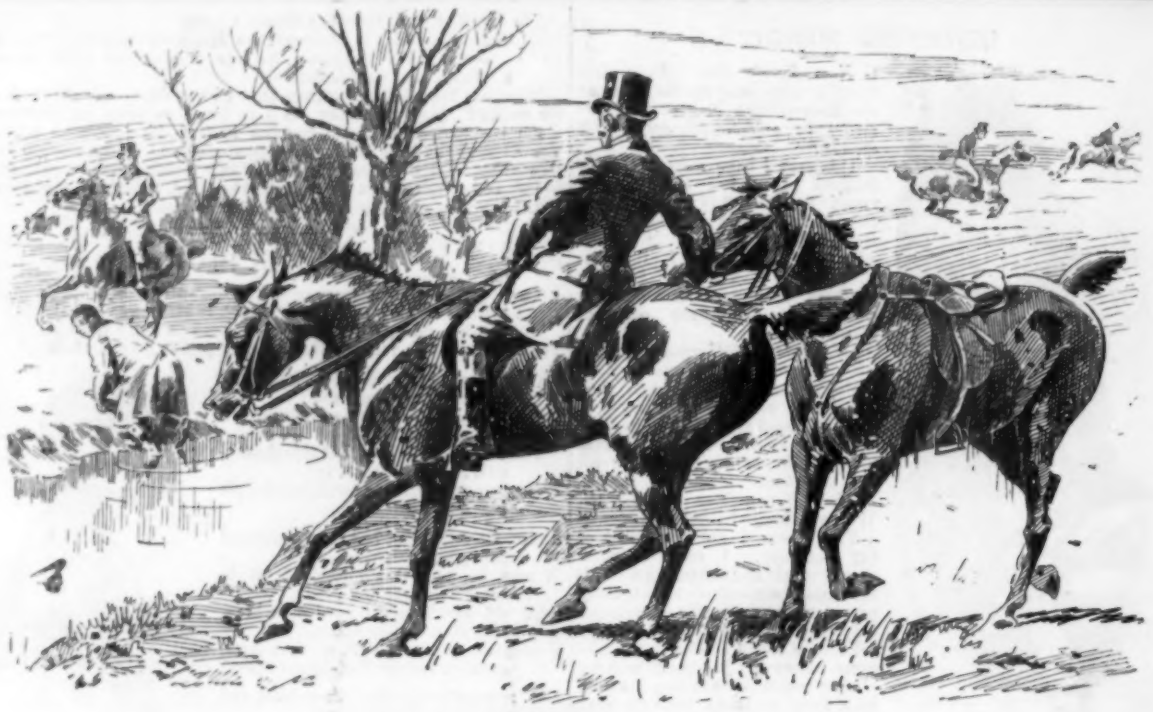
If thus I seem inquisitive, don't kill me with a frown!
Though times are hard, in vulgar phrase, I'll plank my money down!
Your train of thought to share (if you 'll accept a penny-tariff),
I tender, with my compliments, the coin that 's called a "brown"!

PRODIGIOUS!

TO MR. PUNCH,—Sir,—I appeal to you. Ought scientific papers to be allowed to publish incitements to bloodshed and anarchy? I have just read in one an enthusiastic commendation of "an agitator working at 280 revolutions per minute." This agitator is, it appears, closely connected with an "annihilator." It is true that the annihilator is a smoke-annihilator, and the agitator is part of its machinery; but who knows what influence may be exerted upon weak minds at such a time as this by the use of these awful terms? Is the Home Secretary asleep? Yours, A PATRIOT.

MYSTERIOUS.—In *Sala's Journal* for December 13 the advertisement of the Christmas Number announces that "arrangements have been made for publishing the Portraits of the Contributors at the commencement of their respective articles. This, it is believed, will prove a very interesting feature." No doubt. But *which* "feature," and *whose* "feature," and to which contributor will "the very interesting feature" in the portrait belong? They cannot surely have only one feature among them! Among the special contributors, each of course with distinctive features, are SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS, MR. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS, MR. ARTHUR À BECKETT, and MR. DAVENPORT ADAMS. Excellent company each, with most interesting features. But which feature is to be taken as representing the lot? "Nose?" Well, there's point in that. "Cheek?" Ahem! Will it be "All their eye?" Evidently the only way of satisfying curiosity is to purchase a copy of *S. J.'s* Christmas Number.

SEASONABLE RIDDLE.—When does a turkey look a goose?—When quite by himself he has to face a party of twenty-four.



INHUMAN.

Sportsman (who has caught Brown's mare). "NOW THEN! THIS WAY OUT, SIR, THIS WAY OUT!"
Brown (who has already swallowed about a quart of mud and water). "B—B—BUT IT'S DEEP!"
Sportsman (impatient). "CONFOUND IT, MAN! DO YOU EXPECT ME TO FETCH A BOAT?"

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS.

For the Czar.—Allianoes—French and Triple.
For the Kaiser.—"The Great Revenge."
For the King of Italy.—The Military Estimates.
For the King of Greece.—The Adjustment of the National Revenue.
For the President of the French Republic.—The Legacy of CARNOT the First.
For the President of the United States.—Protected Free Trade.
For the Sultan.—The Khedive.
For the Khedive.—The Sultan.
For the Premier.—His followers.
For the Foreign Secretary.—His colleagues.
For the Chancellor of the Exchequer.—The coming Budget.
For the Home Secretary.—Trafalgar Square.
For the Colonial Secretary.—South Africa.
For the Postmaster-General.—Cards for Christmas and the New Year.
For the War Office.—The Admiralty.
For the Admiralty.—The War Office.
For the Theatre-Managers.—The Clerk of the Weather.
For the Music-Hall Proprietors.—The London County Council.
For the London Public.—The Paving Contractors.
For the Bar.—The Solicitors.
For the Solicitors.—Reluctant Litigants.
For the Stockbrokers.—The State of the City.
For the Poor.—The Condition of the Money Market.
And for the World in general and Britons in particular.—The Influenza.

THE KISS THAT COSTS.

[A fair plaintiff, who brought a breach of promise action worth under ordinary circumstances at least £1000, had to be content with £100 because she had in the meantime been kissed by a new suitor.]

THE gorse is out in kissing time,
And that is always—so the saw.
But know from henceforth (and this rhyme)
This does not follow in the Law.
For she, who, jilted by her swain,
Brings him to Court, and braves the laughter,
Must—if she longs for gold—refrain
From kissing Number Two—till after!

A Little Girl's Christmas Story.

POLLY!	Folly
Holly!	(Gobbles!)
Jolly!	Colly
Dolly!	(Wobbles!)

OUR BARTERERS.—SIDEBOARD.—I have a magnificent-looking article, made of unseasoned deal, coloured to resemble walnut. As great care has been taken to imitate a really first-class piece of furniture by a good maker, it is hoped that the fact that the wood is certain to split and warp, that the drawers jam, that the keyholes are dummies, and that the whole is a piece of cunning shoddy, will escape the attention of the average purchasing idiot. What offers?

TO PICKWICKIAN STUDENTS.—Of what class of persons is it recorded in *Pickwick* that "their looks are not prepossessing and their manners are peculiar"?

THE CRY OF THE CIVIC TURTLE.

'TWAS the voice of the Turtle, I heard him complain,
"You would wake me! Be off!! Let me slumber again!
Your 'Royal Commission on Unification'
Be ——!" something that seemed to convey commination
"*I* shan't 'tender evidence'—hang it, not I!—
Why I, as a separate body, should die!
I've power, prosperity, plumpness, and pelf;
If you want an 'Amalgam'—why, mix it yourself!"

Feminine Saturnalia.

[Miss KLUMPKE has just achieved a great triumph with a learned treatise on the Rings of Saturn.]

OH! maiden, learned, wise, you can
To froward woman prove a pattern,
You pay your due respect to Man
By writing up the Rings—of Saturn!

NEW PRANDIAL PROVERBS.—What's underdone can't be helped. A bird in a pie is worth two in a dish. Apollinaris (or any other) water in time saves wine. The early guest gets it hot. It is never too late to dine.

A TRUTH IN SEASON.—What would Christmas be without the Cracker? Messrs. G. SPARAGNAPANE have their reply ready with their "Cracker Skirt-Dancer" and their "May Blossom" (so nice in December), which is a pleasant souvenir of *The* Wedding. Of course, all these crackers will "go off" well!

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